

AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT, INCORPORATED

479 Huntington Avenue
Boston 15, Massachusetts

NEWSLETTER NUMBER THIRTY-THREE
April, 1959

The following communications have been received from the Fellows of the Center in Egypt, Dr. Helen K. Wall and Dr. John Alden Williams. Dr. Williams is temporarily in India. Mrs. Wall may be addressed at Morland House, 16 Sharia el Sheikh Barakat, Kasr el Doubara, Cairo.

Letters from Fellows of the Center

From Helen K. Wall

Cairo, December 15, 1958

Perhaps the most interesting archaeological news so far in the present season is provided by the discovery of two sculptures in Upper Egypt. The joint excavation of Chicago House and the Department of Antiquities at the tomb of Kheruef have brought to light the head of a quartzite statue, presumably of Kheruef himself. It will be remembered that last year fragments of the body of another statue were found in the debris of the great hall of the tomb, which was almost completely filled with rubble owing to the collapse of the roof. Furthermore, clearance operations carried on by the Department of Antiquities in front of the pylon of the Luxor temple have uncovered a statue of Ramses III in almost perfect condition. Since statues of this king are comparatively rare, this find is particularly interesting.

Dr. Ricardo Caminos of Brown University arrived here recently for a stay of several months. After some time in Cairo, to be spent in collating texts in the Museum, he will leave for Abydos, where he will continue the work of Miss Calverly at the temple of Seti I. In February, he will be joined by Mr. Cyril Aldred of the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh, and together they will proceed to Gebel Silsile to work on the quarry inscriptions, carrying on the investigation begun four years ago by Dr. Caminos and Dr. James of the British Museum on behalf of the Egypt Exploration Society.

Cairo recently enjoyed the visit of an amateur actors' group from the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Florida. The group, under the direction of Professor and Mrs. Edmunds of the drama department of the University, was sent out under the United States cultural exchange program and had already been to Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Abyssinia, and a number of other countries. Their performances, which included Medea and a number of modern one-act plays, were given at the American University and were very well received. As the group wished to see something of the ancient monuments, Mr. Lovegrove, Cultural Attache at the Embassy, asked me to take them to Giza. We spent a delightful morning there, visiting the Great Pyramid and the Sphinx, riding camels and taking photographs of them. (It must be admitted that they are very photogenic animals!) On the evening of



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the same day, Mr. Lovegrove gave a reception in honor of the group at his home in Zamalek, which were attended by many persons from the Embassy, the American University, and the Egyptian Cultural Department.

The Sunday morning tours conducted by the Center were resumed on November 9th. Since Dr. Williams was still rather weak after his recent illness, I took charge of the first two trips, both to Giza. We again visited the Great Pyramid, for the sake of the newcomers, and then, with the help of the Sheikh el-Ghafar, Mohammed Abd el-Magoud, we were able to see the small tomb of Idu and the much more imposing one of Queen Meresankh III lying east of the Pyramid. The former is particularly interesting because of its unique false door, which shows a statue of the upper part of the body of Idu, as if he were emerging from his tomb to partake of the offerings presented to him in his chapel. The latter, excavated by the Harvard-Boston expedition under Dr. Reisner, is well known for its excellently preserved reliefs of scenes from daily life.

The second visit was devoted to the valley temple of Khephren and the causeway and the funerary temple of Mycerinus. In passing, we noted that the northern face of the pyramid of Khephren has been almost entirely cleared of sand, revealing a large number of granite blocks from the lower part of the casing, a few of them still in place. A rough stairway, camouflaged so as not to mar the exterior aspect of the pyramid, has been built to lead up to the entrance, thus facilitating the visit of the interior.

Another morning was spent at the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, and the last tour before my departure for Luxor was devoted to the Step Pyramid, the Pyramid of Unas, and the tombs along the causeway leading to it. Excavation at the lower end of the causeway is still in progress, under the general supervision of Dr. Selim Hassan. At the upper end, the work of reconstruction continues, and the sculptured blocks are being replaced in their original positions in the rebuilt wall.

One of the big events of the past few weeks was the opening of the agricultural and industrial exposition at Gezireh. The official opening was presided over by President Nasser, who spent eight hours examining the various displays. It was heralded by a salvo of artillery and a grand parade through the main streets of Cairo. After dark, a half-hour of fireworks enlivened the scene. This exhibition shows agricultural and industrial products of the entire United Arab Republic and scenes illustrating the progress made in modern techniques. As an added attraction, the gardens opposite the fair-grounds have been turned into an amusement park with merry-go-rounds, shooting galleries, booths offering trinkets for sale, cafes, etc. At night the whole area is lit with strings of small lights, and the effect is very gay indeed.

I recently had the opportunity of making a trip with a party of friends to a rather out-of-the-way site, that of the Graeco-Roman city of Dimai, west of the Fayoum lake. A vast mound marks the site of the city, scattered over with the remains of dwellings and public buildings.

The most notable among these is the temple, which is mostly of mud brick plastered and painted, but partly of stone. It is much destroyed, but the temenos wall which surrounds it still rises to an impressive height, and the peculiar color of the brick, almost white instead of the usual dark gray, is very beautiful. A long, paved street with remains of houses on both sides leads through the city to a gate (now destroyed) and a stairway leading down toward the lake from the escarpment on which the city stands. The Greek name of the city, Soknopaios Nesos, "The Island of Soknopaios," or the crocodile god, "Sobek of the Mound," seems to recall the fact that in very ancient times, when the lake stood at a much higher level than at present, the site of the Graeco-Roman city, perhaps already inhabited, was an island.

Not far north of Dimai, at the base of a craggy cliff, stands the temple of Kasr es-Sagha, dating probably from the Old Kingdom. It is in excellent condition (excepting the roof), built of large irregularly shaped blocks of fossiliferous limestone, quarried locally, and extremely simple in plan and construction. A long, transverse corridor leads to one small room on the right and two even smaller ones on the left. The rear wall of the corridor consists of seven small doors decorated with torus mouldings and surmounted by cavetto cornices, which lead into seven small chapels. There are no inscriptions anywhere in the temple, but many Old Kingdom objects have been found nearby, so it is probable that it dates from that period. The surrounding desert is rich in Neolithic remains, and I might add that the site is one of the most beautiful I have seen in Egypt.

Mme. Burchard-Simaika, the well-known Swiss painter, held a vernissage at her apartment in the Sharia Kasr el-Nil last Friday. The work shown included a number of her paintings made during a recent trip to Thailand. The decorative quality and bright coloring of Thai architecture and costume lend themselves very well to Mme. Simaika's style, and I found her landscapes striking and interesting. Egyptian subjects were of course not lacking: I was particularly impressed by her portraits of fellahin.

The new Nile-Hilton Hotel, which is scheduled to open in a month or so, is now taking form, so that one can guess at what the finished product will be like. The building itself is very attractive. It rests on pillars, so that one will be able to look through it from the Midan el-Tahrir right out to the Nile. For decoration, inside and out, the architects have used motifs inspired by ancient Egyptian art. Many of the rooms will be adorned with casts of reliefs from tombs or temples. The exterior boasts extensive mosaic panels. Over the main entrance is a procession of offering bearers and a large expanse of wall overlooking the Midan is covered with gigantic hieroglyphic signs. These, while adding a spot of brightness to the landscape, have unfortunately been chosen at random, are not always correct in shape or of particularly pleasing proportion.

Helen Wall

From John Alden Williams

Cairo, December 20, 1958

The city is taking on something of a Christmas air, at least so far as the windows of the big department stores are concerned, and shopping for Christmas gifts among the perennial fascinations of the Muski and Khan Khalili gives the illusion of the bustle and confusion of a Christmas crowd back home. I feel lucky to be in Cairo at this time of the year -- there are so many wonderful things to buy as gifts at such reasonable prices. It is unfortunate that sending things out of the country often means doubling the original price and no end of trouble.

Mrs. Wall has left for Luxor, and I shall take advantage of the end-of-the-year lull to go to Damascus to study the Museum, the Great Mosque of the Ummayyads, and other monuments. Since the Union, plane fares to Damascus have been considerably reduced: it costs only about thirty-eight dollars for the round trip.

Perhaps one of the pleasantest manifestations of the peaceful season has been a distinct warming up, in the press and official circles, of Egyptian-American relations, following the visit of Mr. Rountree. Mr. Rountree's declaration that he was there on a mission of friendship was apparently not merely a formality. The friendly reception he received in Cairo contrasted with that he met with in Iraq, where recently most of the leaders of the Ba'athists, who are usually regarded as partisans of President Nasser, have been rounded up and imprisoned.

Another bit of news is that the agreement between the Shell Oil Company and Egypt, restoring the right of the company to resume operations here, was initialled yesterday. This gives promise that normal relations with England may soon be resumed.

Among today's headlines is one announcing the new American giant satellite, which has aroused much favorable and interested comment in the press. Another feature story is a conference between President Nasser and representatives of Syrian business and agriculture, at which the economic integration of the Northern and Southern regions of the United Arab Republic was discussed. President Nasser is quoted as saying that it is necessary for the Republic to proceed with all speed to an industrialization and modernization compatible with the cultural heritage and religion of the Arab peoples, "if they were not to be submerged in the flood." He added that no one wished to see here developments such as those of China and Russia, "where people are treated like machines."

Readers of Newsletter No. 32 will remember my remarks on the new law governing private schools in the United Arab Republic. It now appears that the American School in Maadi, as well as a few others for foreign residents who are, so to speak, in passage, will not be obliged to comply with its provisions. I am informed, however, that the Italian and Greek schools, as well as the American College for Girls, whose students come mainly from

families permanently residing in Egypt, will be subject to the law. The law is being studied by a committee of lawyers and has not yet become operative.

The Ford Foundation has just established a permanent office in Cairo in the Air-India Building, 2 Sharia Sulaiman Pasha, with Mr. John Hillyard as Cairo representative. The German Embassy has also opened a cultural center, something on the order of the United States Information Service, but with greater emphasis on Kultur. It features lectures on German literature, German films and music, exhibitions of art. It is being well received and should prove a welcome addition to Western cultural endeavors in Cairo.

Among recent visitors to Cairo are the following:

Dr. William Shorger, the well-known specialist in Near Eastern anthropology, who is on sabbatical leave from the University of Michigan for research in Egypt. He has offered a series of seminars at the American University on the Middle East as a cultural area and the approach to anthropology.

Mr. Nikita Zhukov, a recent graduate in architecture from Columbia, who holds a grant for the study of Byzantine architecture. He is visiting the ancient Coptic and Greek Orthodox monuments and other remains of the early Christian period and studying Byzantine influences in Islamic architecture. He will proceed from Egypt to Jordan, Labanon, and Syria.

Dr. Christina Phelps Harris, of the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, a well-known student of modern Middle Eastern politics, who has just returned to Egypt from a visit to the Arabian Peninsula.

Mr. Charles Geddes, formerly of the School of Oriental Studies of the American University, en route from London, where he is finishing his dissertation, to India. Mr. Geddes' specialty is the Islamic history of Yemen and the Red Sea area, and he wishes to study some of the many Yemeni manuscripts in Indian collections.

Dr. Frederick Harbison, professor of Industrial Relations at Princeton and a trustee of the American University, who has been in Cairo with his family for a brief visit.

Cairo, January 18, 1959

As planned, I spent the time between Christmas and New Year's in Damascus, capital of the Northern Province. The city has a very different atmosphere from that of Cairo -- colder, to begin with, smaller, more withdrawn, and not devoid of a certain suspicion toward strangers. The people seem to be much on their dignity, with a tendency to melancholy and aloofness which contrasts strikingly with the sociable, talkative, pleasure-loving Cairenes. Damascus is also, of course, far more conservative. Its physical setting, among the gardens and orchards of the Ghutah, set round with high, barren mountains, is both dramatic and delightful; the nights are sharp and cold, and the air is tangy with

woodsmoke. The cuisine is famous, and the streets, with their beduins and mountaineers, are a medley of colorful costumes and interesting human types.

But Damascus has changed considerably in the six years since I last spent any time there. It has grown greatly, expanding in new, modern sections, and the business area has been built up. Wide boulevards have been opened, and the Damascenes are justly proud of the fine modern appearance of their city. We have referred to the effect of modernization on Islamic archaeology, and in Damascus, too, whole old quarters, colorful and interesting even in ruins, are being demolished to put through streets or projects. Even the great sugs which were for many one of Damascus' chief attractions, have been reduced in area, and replaced in part by neat lanes of modern shops with plate-glass windows. There is certainly no reason why one should complain that this is unreasonable -- the old sugs were fire-traps, often infested with rats, and neither aesthetically appealing nor notably functional. But for many travellers, they were an important part of a venerable and beautiful city, and cannot pass completely unmourned.

Far more extraordinary than the sugs is of course the Great Mosque of the Umayyads, always regarded as a master work of Islamic architecture. Time has not spared it, but it is still the glory of Damascus. The famous mosaic panels of the courtyard, only discovered at about the turn of the century, are undergoing extensive restoration, so that I could not photograph them in detail, but with their fresh colors and extraordinary landscapes of cities, rivers, mountains, and palaces, they were worth the trip to Syria. According to tradition, the sanctuary was decorated by Coptic workmen and the riwaqs and galleries of the courtyard by Greeks. Certainly, the effect, on gold ground, is fully Byzantine. Scaffolding has been erected across the west riwaq, and a crew of men works busily on that area and the western vestibule, replacing missing or damaged tesserae and mother-of-pearl, so that areas look almost impertinently shiny and new. However, the restoration is an improvement on the remains of the mosaics in the north transept and at the great entrance, which are blackened by the fire of 1893. When all the walls and arcades gleamed with golden mosaic and marble panelling, the effect was unquestionably magnificent; we are told that the mosque was deliberately planned to rival the Byzantine churches of Syria and Palestine.

The panels themselves, although they did not, so far as is known, contain representations of men or animals, cast interesting light on the attitude of early Islam toward pictures. As is well-known, representations of living beings are not forbidden in the Koran -- the Prophet is said even to have spared the pictures of the Madonna and Child which were painted on the walls of the Ka'aba -- but sayings attributed to the Prophet are hostile to such representation. Early Islamic monuments and coins, however, make ample use of pictures. Oddly enough hostility to painting in Islam seems to date from the first part of the eighth century, and is thus contemporary with the Iconoclastic heresy in Christianity. The earliest example in Islam seems to be the edict of Yazid II ordering the breaking of the Christians' ikons, and he reigned 720-724. (The edict was promptly revoked.)

I mention these commonplaces only for those readers who are not acquainted with the history of Islamic art. Actually, more striking evidence still is provided in Damascus' National Syrian Museum, by the reconstruction there of a good portion of an Umayyad desert chateau, dating from 728 A. D. This is Qasr al-Hayr, built by the Caliph Hisham, who was remarkable for his interest in Persian Civilization. Significantly, this complex of buildings, of which only the western structure has been excavated, contains the first stucco-work of which we know in Islam, and was supplied with water by Persian-type underground qanats. Particularly interesting are the stucco sculptures of the Caliph, enthroned and riding on horseback, costumed like a Sasanian monarch. Moreover, in the courtyard, a number of interesting sculptures and human representations were found on the balustrades of the second story -- they resemble very late Hellenistic work from the East and include mythological figures, dancing girls, and groups of men. Paintings found in certain rooms as murals include a large and very interesting group of representations in which there is an obvious desire to convey, or create, character.

The entire collection is perhaps the best housed and displayed in the entire Near East, and besides Islamic antiquities, includes objects from every major recent dig in Syria. The director is still the very capable and courteous Dr. Selim Bey Abd al-Haqq, Director of Antiquities, and the Curator of the Islamic collection is Mr. Abu al-Farraj al-'Ish. Both of them were most helpful and cooperative in providing photographs of objects in the Museum and arranging visits to other sites.

Professor Creswell had asked me to discuss with Dr. Selim Bey the possibility of excavating the remaining major structure at Qasr al-Hayr, which he is particularly interested to see explored in the next year. Dr. Abd-al-Haqq informed me, however, that the Antiquities Service cannot make provision for exploring Qasr al-Hayr in the foreseeable future, since its budget is already allotted in advance. In the coming year, the Service will excavate one of the Abassid Palaces at Raqqa on the Euphrates, presumably dating from the reign of Harun al-Rashid, where preliminary investigations already show remains of stucco ornament resembling Herzfeld's "Third Style" from Samarra. -- distinguished mainly by vine ornament, which appears full blown on the earliest Samarran structures. In addition, the Syrian Antiquities Service plans to excavate another one of the major Palmyrene tombs. (Another of their most effective exhibits is a fully reconstructed tomb chamber in the interesting art of that desert Arab kingdom of the 3rd century.)

Since he cannot excavate Qasr el-Hayr himself, but is eager to see the work done, Dr. Selim Bey said he could only hope that a foreign institution would undertake to do it, and he foresaw no difficulties in a qualified individual or organization obtaining permission -- au contraire. Since the structure in question, Qasr el-Hayr Sharqi, is mostly on or near the surface, the costs would not include much removal of earth, but as it is some 60 miles northeast of Palmyra and 40 miles south of Rusafa, it would involve a desert camp. The western structure, much smaller, which has been excavated, was probably the actual Caliphal

residence; the larger unexcavated complex may have been used by his entourage. Professor Creswell believes that the project is highly worth investigating and says that anyone interested would do well to contact Prof. Daniel Schlumberger, who worked there earlier.

Another structure in which Professor Creswell is greatly interested is the small chateau or lodge built by al-Walid I, at Jebel Sais, in the Saffar district, out along the Baghdad route. This includes a mosque, audience hall, and hammam, and is built on a plateau so that very little clearing needs to be done. The whole rather resembles Qusayr 'Amra, which has often been ascribed to Walid I (d. 715). These two monuments, both in Syria, are the only two lacking to Prof. Creswell's Corpus of Early Architecture (Book I), which he has rewritten, using the latest material and results of excavations for the period up to the rise of the Abassids and the founding of Baghdad. He is understandably anxious to publish this new, up-to-date edition, but cannot, so long as these two interesting early Islamic sites go begging for excavators.

During the coming year, the Egyptian Antiquities Department plans to make a full chronological survey of the tombs at the Islamic necropolis of Aswan -- which should tell us a good deal about the evolution of the qubbah, or domed Islamic tomb. One must sincerely hope that the project is carried out.

Professor Louis Massignon, formerly of the College de France, has been in Cairo for the past ten days, and will give a second lecture on Tuesday at Dar es-Salam study house. His first lecture, given last Tuesday, was "La Geographie Spirituelle du Monde." He will leave here on Wednesday.

On the twelfth of this month, the newspapers carried the information that the body of Dr. Zakariah Ghoneim, the well-known Egyptian Egyptologist, had been found floating in the Nile between Kasr el-Nil bridge and Abu el-Ala bridge. He was scheduled to take over as Director of the Egyptian Museum in ten days' time, but had been suffering, according to his friends, from fits of nervous depression, and it is believed he took his life while in such a state of mind, on the tenth.

Recently, the Jesuit College, usually considered the best preparatory school in the country, was taken over by the government. It is accused of having used textbooks which state that most of Africa is under European control and that Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco are part of the French Union. One of the Jesuit Fathers has informed me that the texts in question are in French geographies several years old and that the incriminating passages on Africa and the Middle East were not being taught but were supplemented, as outmoded, by more up-to-date materials. For many years, the school has graduated an impressive section of the elite of the country and still has among its students the children of many high government officials and important intellectuals of all faiths. The seizure has been followed by petitions from prominent Muslims requesting that the school be reopened under the full direction of the Jesuits. It is still too soon to say what action will be taken, but the matter has aroused great interest in the educated public.

(See Dr. Williams' letter of February 25 on the reopening of the Jesuit schools)

Cairo, February 25, 1959

The storms in the Eastern Mediterranean, which have meant an unusually cold and gray week or two, have not prevented Cairo from having a very bright and gay February. The opera season has been the best in years. President Tito's visit and the festivities attendant on the first anniversary of the Union of Syria and Egypt have taken the minds of the people off the weather. If anything more were needed, the opening of the new Nile-Hilton was like a premiere at Grauman's Chinese, with a great bevy of American film stars and a "pharaonic" parade. The type of conspicuous consumption the hotel represents has suddenly become very much a la mode.

I have more than once mentioned the threat to Islamic monuments posed by modern town-planning. Quite recently, an important site in Egypt's Islamic past has narrowly escaped destruction. This is the eleventh-century necropolis of Aswan, where it was planned to raze all the mud-brick gubbas, or domed mausoleums, of which it was composed. Fortunately, the Department of Antiquities and the Committee for the Preservation of Monuments intervened, with the result that only one or two relatively unimportant structures will be destroyed. Furthermore, I understand that the northern and southern sections of the necropolis will be walled and set apart as a preserve.

It is for such things that the Department and the Committee most usefully function. One hopes that the day will not be far distant when every Islamic country will have similar bodies, dedicated to preserve the artifacts of its history.

I may add, perhaps unnecessarily, that the Aswan necropolis lies outside the area to be inundated with the construction of the proposed high dam. Strangely enough, it has already suffered from flooding. During the past century, a torrential cloudburst -- almost miraculous in that region -- melted or to some extent damaged nearly all the mausoleums, washing out the stone inscriptions set in their walls. In order to save them, the inscriptions were picked up and sent to Cairo, but without numbering in relation to the monuments they came from. Thus the date of every mausoleum, with one or two exceptions, has been lost.

Apropos of threatened monuments, an interesting bit of old Cairo has recently come to light, the story of which is rather interesting. Across from the Islamic Museum, in Bab al-Khalq Square, there stood until recently the Cairo Governorate, demolished only this year. In the southwest corner of the building was a small chamber containing a cenotaph, which was accessible from the outside by a single door; in it a few women of the lower classes were usually to be found praying. It was known as the tomb of Sitta Sa'ada and bore above the door an Arabic inscription in blue letters: "This is the place of the Lady Sa'ada, daughter of Sayyidna Husayn (i. e., the martyred grandson of the Prophet)."

Now it is known that the Southwest Gate of Cairo, as rebuilt by Salah-ed-Din al-Ayyubi, stood somewhere in the neighborhood, disappearing in 1555 when the mosque and takiya of the Wazir Iskandar Pasha were built. Like its predecessor, the gate in the walls of Gawhar al-Saqalli, which stood more than a hundred meters to the northeast, is of Ayyubid

construction and was known as Bab al-Sa'ada. Professor Creswell has argued that the information given by Maqrizi, if followed literally, would place the second Bab al-Sa'ada somewhere in the middle of the Midan (Square) of Bab al-Khalq and, following other clues, has reasoned that it must have been quite near the tomb of Sitta Sa'ada, who was probably guardian of the gate.

We have mentioned before that every gate of Cairo still standing has a wali, or saint, in it. One cannot be quite sure how they got there. Even gates like al-Mahruq and al-Qarratin, now vanished, have saints' tombs near their supposed sites. It is quite possible that the bodies were transferred to their respective gates at the time of building. Since the first Bab al-Sa'ada was built in the earliest days of Cairo (al-Qahira, the Fatimid city), around 970, and the name of the saint is that of the gate, it seems most likely that she was first buried -- if ever she was buried -- at the first Bab al-Sa'ada and that her relics were transferred in Ayyubid times to the second Bab al-Sa'ada.

When the Ayyubid construction was demolished in the Ottoman period to make way for the mosque of Iskandar Pasha, the tomb or its supposed site was of course left undisturbed, and again in the nineteenth century, when the mosque gave place to the Governorate and the Midan, in deference to the saint's popularity the place of her burial was incorporated into the Governorate. Now the Governorate has been cleared away and only the chamber has been left standing on the site. Armed policemen guard it, and it and they are surrounded by a small crowd, mostly women in black malayahs. Word has got out that "they" plan to destroy the saint's tomb, and the people are there by popular agreement to see that the slightest attempt in that direction is met with determined resistance. One can imagine that a similar determination on the part of their ancestors in the nineteenth century then saved the tomb for a hundred years, but it seems unlikely that the little shrine -- a manifestation of popular religion and as such always suspect to modern neo-orthodoxy -- will be given another hundred years' reprieve. Excavations are being carried on under the cenotaph by workmen guarded by police, and it is declared that no burial has been found. This fact would presumably leave the Ministry of Works free to demolish the shrine. I was allowed to approach the place more closely than the weeping women, but I did not get beyond the door of the room where the men are working. I asked a policeman if at least an inscription had been found. He repeated insistently, "No. No. Nothing at all has been found. Nothing at all has been found." But probably he did not mean to be taken literally, for the foundations of the gate and wall of the twelfth century have been found within a few feet of where Professor Creswell predicated they would be.

The Jesuit schools which were seized by the Government have this week been returned to the full jurisdiction of the Order, with the injunction that in the future the Jesuits apply "the spirit as well as the letter of the laws of the United Arab Republic governing private schools and education."

The group of Polish Orientalists from the University of Cracow, who were here last year, have just returned to Cairo, and the Polish physical anthropologists have just returned to Poland, after an expedition to Siwa and the Western Desert, during which they measured more than two thousand skulls, past and present. Dr. Wierczinski, who has been mentioned frequently in the Newsletters, told me that they were delighted with the results of their work in Egypt. They will now concentrate in Warsaw on interpretation of their findings. They will continue to collaborate with the Egyptian National Science Foundation, and Egyptian students will be going to Poland for training in anthropology and anthropometry. The Polish scientists hope that a long-range program of joint study may be thus set up.

Other recent visitors in Cairo were Professor Emeritus Hitti of Princeton, on a visit to the UAR and Lebanon, and Colonel Eddy on a midwinter trip from Beirut. Professor J. C. Hurawitz of Columbia, the author of Middle East Dilemmas and other books, was here briefly from Turkey, where he is spending a sabbatical leave. The most recent arrival was Mr. Neville Barbour, author of what was in its time perhaps the best book on the Palestine question: Nisi Dominus, published in the United States as Palestine, Star and Crescent. Mr. Barbour has just finished editing an area study of North Africa, complete with historical and sociological notes, which, in view of the great scarcity of material on North Africa, for the use of students, particularly in English, should be very welcome. This should come out in a month or so. Mr. Barbour is now embarking on a tour of the Red Sea and South Arabian area.

Khartoum, March 9, 1959

Since the 6th, I am on my way to India -- due to a last-minute attack of influenza, five days later than planned.

Khartoum comes as a surprise. I had thought it would resemble Arab capitals, but what little of the Orient is here -- aside from the dominant language and the dominant religion -- is Anglo-Indian, built under the influence of British administrators trained in India. For the most part, it strikes one as a thoroughly African city, with formless brick one-story, tin-roofed structures sprawling along wide, dusty roads, populated by great numbers of transient and sedentary blue-black and brown people in a dozen kinds of costumes. There is a small nucleus of modern office buildings and, along the Blue Nile, a row of fine villas set among beautiful tropical trees. It is all flooded by intense, blinding sunlight.

Dr. Jean Vercoutter, the Commissioner for Archaeology, received me most affably and described to me the current archaeological activities in the Sudan.

Here, the archaeological season is ending. Ramadan begins on the eleventh of March, and after that comes the hottest part of the year, which lasts until the rains begin in July or so. During the season there have been three foreign expeditions working here. That of the Egypt Exploration

Society, led by Professor W. B. Emery of the University of London, which is excavating a Middle Kingdom fortress at Buhen, some five miles south of Wadi Halfa, has been mentioned in several previous Newsletters; a further account can be found in the London University News for June, 1958. The expedition of the University of Pisa at Soleb, more than 200 miles south of Wadi Halfa, is also known to readers of the Newsletters. In addition to these, the East Germans (See Newsletter 29) have engaged in an exploratory expedition in the Butana desert, the area between the Nile and the Atbara, where they have spotted over forty new Meroitic sites. A preliminary report appears in the Abhandlungen of the German Academy, and the Germans are seeking permission to excavated next season in the area covered by the investigation. Another preliminary study was made by Professor Hibben of the University of New Mexico at the paleolithic site of Khor Abu Anga.

The Sudan Antiquities Service has been working at Defeiya, ten miles north of Khartoum, where a sphinx of Aspalta has been found, surprisingly far to the south of Napata (See Newsletter 29). Dr. Vercoutter thinks that there must be a temple in the vicinity, but it has so far been impossible to locate it. The sphinx, now in the museum at Khartoum, is of gray granite, about three feet long. Two buildings of the Christian period, identifiable as such by their stamped bricks, have also been found at Defeiya. Further excavations by the Service at Omdurman have revealed a much-disturbed Meroitic settlement and cemetery. Other Meroitic structures have been discovered at Wad Ben Naga. These include a tomb, a temple, a palace, a very large unidentifiable building, and a unique round structure, unlike anything previously known from the Meroitic period. It is planned to continue work at this site.

Dr. Vercoutter reports that his great problems are lack of funds and lack of time. Currently at the top of his list is the preservation of the Arab section of Suakin, hear Port Sudan -- the only real Arab city, he says, ever built in Sudan. It flourished from the sixteenth century, probably was settled from the fourteenth (according to some, though proof is as yet lacking, it has been settled continuously since Ptolemaic times). It has a number of fine old Arab town houses of the eighteenth and nineteenth century and some earlier structures. Little is actually known about it, and the lack of trained Islamic archaeologists on the staff of the Antiquities Service means that investigations can not take place in the foreseeable future. It is of immediate importance to make sure that there will be something left to investigate, for the heirs of the owners of this ghost city are busily carrying off its materials for building in near-by Port Sudan. Without a sizable sum of money, and this, within the next year, it will be impossible to prevent the destruction of the city.

Very much on Dr. Vercoutter's mind is the area which will be flooded by the High Dam. At present, he intimates, the dam would be an Egyptological disaster, for there are over one hundred sites in Sudan (unlike Egyptian Nubia) of which nothing at all is known.

Owing to the lack of available funds (the government has just abandoned its plans for a new museum) his only recourse is to try to attract foreign missions and to interest UNESCO. I have urged him to write something on the archaeological problems of this area for the Newsletters, and he hopes to find time to do so during Ramadan.

During the past year an aerial survey has indicated, among other things, the presence of an ancient dam, built after the fortress of Thutmosis III was constructed, in order to raise the waters of the Nile at the Second Cataract to enable river navigation to pass it.

John A. Williams

From Helen K. Wall

Luxor, January 23, 1959

I arrived at Luxor on the 16th of December, very happy to leave the dust and bustle of Cairo for the peace of Upper Egypt. Dr. Wilson, who is replacing Dr. Hughes this year at Chicago House, very kindly took me in as a member of his resident family for the two months or so I expect to be here.

The expedition of the University of Chicago this year consists of Dr. and Mrs. Wilson, Dr. and Mrs. Nims, Mr. Healy, who keeps all the mechanical parts of the establishment running smoothly, and three artists: Mr. Floroff, who has been with the expedition for many years, Mr. Coleman, who is in his second season at Chicago House, and Mr. Greener, who came all the way from Tasmania to rejoin the staff after an absence of some years, part of which were spent in a Japanese prison camp at Singapore and the remainder in a colorful career as journalist and author of several books. Recently, M. Jean-Pierre M. Rathle of Alexandria has arrived to try out his draughtsman's hand with the Epigraphic Survey.

Work has been going on apace at the Luxor temple, and a number of changes have taken place since last year. A large area in front of the temple has been cleared and will eventually be landscaped as a park, continuing the park that now exists to the east, between the temple and the street leading down to the station. For the first time, one can stand back and get a proper view of the entrance to the temple, the alley of sphinxes, the pylon, the obelisk and the statues, and it is a marvelous sight. In the first court, work is being carried on with a view to strengthening the foundations of the mosque of Abul Haggag and clearing away all the earth and stone that has accumulated in the court. The mound under the mosque has been cut to a minimum and a new retaining wall built all around it. The old wall on the south side of the mosque, which was built of reused blocks from the temple and the surrounding constructions, will be taken down and the blocks put aside for study. Concern was felt for the stability of the first pylon of the Luxor Temple when the foundations proved insecure during the removal of the mound

from behind it. Some of the local papers even reported that the Pylon had collapsed. However, as a result of consultation with the authorities in Cairo the situation was rectified by shoring placed at the proper points and we are assured that all danger is past.

The big job of replacing the head on the colossus of Ramses II, west of the entrance to the colonnade, has been accomplished. This head, formerly in the Cairo Museum (CGC 558) was brought back to Luxor last year by Chief Inspector Labib Habachi. A further project, about which a great deal has been said of recent years, has now been accomplished: the piercing of a doorway through the great niche in the so-called "church." This niche, which entirely blocked a doorway of the original structure leading back to the chapel, was built, according to Monnerst de Villard, in the time of the Emperor Diocletian. In front of it was a canopy resting on four pillars, two of which are still in place, which sheltered a statue of the Emperor or some other cult object. Around the walls of the "church" was a painting of a procession of horsemen and foot-soldiers, which converged toward the niche on the back wall, where the Emperor and his three co-regents were represented. The room, therefore, seems not to have been a Christian church at all but a sanctuary for the celebration of the imperial cult and the preservation of the legionary insignia. Formerly, since the doorway was blocked by the niche, which lies in the axis of the temple, visitors were obliged to go out of the temple and reenter it through the birth-room, in order to reach the sanctuary. A small doorway has now been pierced through the masonry below the niche, without destroying any of the painting which still survives. A couple of steps compensate for the difference in floor-level between the "church" and the pillared hall in back of it, leaving just enough room for a not-too-tall person to pass through. At Karnak, the work of removing the re-used blocks forming the filling of the northern half of the third pylon is finally under way. In the course of the work, the original outer (west) face of the pylon with flag-staff niches and a large band of inscription was brought to light. Since the eastern wall of the hypostyle hall leans directly against the corresponding face of the southern half of the pylon, it had not previously been known whether or to what extent the outer face of the pylon had been decorated. The clearing of the northern half, accordingly, answers that question.

Otherwise, there is not much activity at Karnak, aside from what seem to be terracing operations behind the sacred lake, where the Department intends to build a rest-house. The house belonging to the Chief Architect, opposite the entrance to the temple, is undergoing alterations. A new entrance is being pierced on the side to serve the upper story, and the garden is being rearranged.

This may perhaps be considered as part of the general scheme for the beautification of Luxor, which is being carried out in accordance with the desires expressed by President Nasser after his visit of last winter. To this end, the road leading to Karnak has been widened and refinished, the garden along the river has been enlarged and is being carefully nurtured, a new landing quay has been constructed on the west bank of the Nile, to receive the ferry which plies between the

Winter Palace and the west shore, and the streets are being regularly watered to keep the dust down (which makes for rather muddy walking).

It is reported that the Department of Antiquities is undergoing reorganization. Abd el-Fatah Helmi retains his position as Director General, but the Department has been divided into two autonomous sections, dealing with Pharaonic and Islamic monuments respectively. Anwar Shukry is in charge of the former, and is the person to be addressed in dealings with the Department on matters concerning Egyptology. The architect Maadi is in charge of the Islamic section. Moreover, the administration of the Museum is being reorganized, with a Curator in charge of each section and responsible for the objects under his care.

The members of the Center will be sorry to hear of the recent death of Zakaria Goneim, the former Chief Inspector of the Saqqara region. His many friends and colleagues will regret the loss of this gentle and friendly scholar whose name has become widely known in recent years through his discovery of the remains of a Third Dynasty pyramid near the pyramid of Zoser at Saqqara.

The clearance operations at the tomb of Kheruef under the Department of Antiquities and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago are still being continued. Some delay was caused at the beginning of the season by lack of trucks to carry off the debris, but that difficulty has been remedied. The two pillared chambers in the form of an inverted T, which form the tomb proper, have now been cleared. Unfortunately the body of the statue belonging to the quartzite head which I mentioned in my last letter has not been found. A sloping passage leading down to the burial chamber was discovered in the southwest corner of the first chamber, as in the tomb of Ramose. The burial chamber was very roughly cut, was entirely empty, and probably never had been used. The work of clearance is continuing in the court in front of the decorated colonnade, which was the first part of the tomb to be discovered.

Before trucks were available for carrying off the debris, it was dumped in front of the Metropolitan House. As the mound became higher and higher, Chief Inspector Abd el-Kader started looking around for a lower spot and noticed a depression near the road. He had it investigated, and a little clearing revealed the entrance to a tomb, seemingly unknown until now, from which access could be gained to a second tomb, equally unknown. Both tombs are of the Nineteenth Dynasty, and their owners were Bakenamon and Simut, called Kiki. They are being cleared by the Department of Antiquities.

Helen K. Wall

Publications by Members of the Center

Anthes, Rudolf. Mit Rahineh 1955, by Rudolph Anthes, with contributions by Hasan S. K. Bakry, John Dimick, Henry G. Fischer, Labib Habachi, Jean Jacquet. The University Museum, Philadelphia, 1959, 93 p., illus., plates, maps, plans.

Messrs. Anthes, Dimick, and Fischer, who participated in the excavation on the site of ancient Memphis, are all members of the Center, which can be justly proud of the scientific report of the first year's exploration, which has just been published as a "Museum Monograph" of the University of Pennsylvania. While this difficult site, situated in the midst of cultivated land and with a high water level that makes digging difficult and destroys evidence, has yielded little in the way of spectacular objects, the excavation has added to our scant knowledge of one of the greatest sanctuaries of ancient Egypt, that of the god Ptah, and has afforded a number of other important footnotes to the history of the site. It is impossible to list here the contributions to Egyptology made as a result of the exploration of a portion of the vast area covered by ancient Memphis. We must signal, however, the scale map of one-tenth of that area, made by Mr. Dimick, which shows the region as it appears today, with indication of such buildings and monuments of the past as can now be located. This should be of enormous value for future study of the site.

Dunham, Dows. The Egyptian Department and its Excavations. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1958. 151 p., illus.

This slim book is not only a most readable history of the building of a great collection, but also offers a running commentary on the advance in Egyptological knowledge that has taken place during the process and a sensitive interpretation of the main tendencies in Egyptian art.

Fischer, Henry G. "Eleventh Dynasty Relief Fragments from Deir el-Bahri," in Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin, XXIV, 2 October, 1958, p. 29-35, illus., plates.

Here Dr. Fischer rescues from obscurity two fragments of Eleventh Dynasty relief from Deir el-Bahri, several of which are in the Yale Art Gallery and the Peabody Museum, New Haven, and furnishes valuable commentary on the art and iconography of the period. These reliefs from the much-destroyed temple of the first ruler of the Eleventh Dynasty and from the mutilated tomb of his queen are among a number that have recently turned up in the trade and in museum storerooms to add to our knowledge of the neglected art of the early Middle Kingdom. Dr. Fischer will discuss other fragments in New Haven in a future article.

Fischer, Henry G. "A Foreman of Stoneworkers and His Family," in The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, XVII, 6, February, 1959, p. 145-153, illus., plates.

A learned and readable article on a group statuette of the Middle Kingdom, depicting Senbebu with his wife and son. This statuette, acquired by the museum in 1956, is attributed to the reign of Sesostriis III or Amenemhet III.

Fischer, Henry G. "A Fragment of Predynastic Egyptian Relief from the Eastern Delta," in Artibus Asiae, XXI, 1, 1958, p. 64-88, illus., plates.

This article, taking as its text a new fragment of a ceremonial palette and proceeding to a discussion of an incomplete palette in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is a valuable contribution to the study of the artistic conventions of such early relief decoration and contributes new evidence for the dating and provenance of the palettes.

Hill, Dorothy K. "An Egypto-Roman Sculptural Type and Mass Production of Bronze Statuettes," in Hesperia, XXVII, 4, 1958, p. 311-317, plates.

The type discussed is the popular wrestler-group. Two bronzes in the Walter's Art Gallery are related to such groups, which were frequently made by combining partial moulds in such a manner as to produce variety cheaply, if often at the expense of artistic unity. The article contributes data on ancient techniques and gives proof that the bronzes were made during the early Roman Empire.

Shepherd, Dorothy G. "An Early Inlaid Brass Ewer from Mesopotamia," in The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art, XLVI, 1, January, 1959, p. 4-10, illus., frontis.

A description of a beautiful ewer, signed and dated 620 A. H. (1223 A. D.) provides a point of departure for a summary of the history and technique of Islamic inlaid metal work.

Shepherd, Dorothy G. "An Egyptian Textile from the Early Christian Period," in The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art, XXXIX, 4, April, 1952, p. 66-68, plates.

This is a preliminary note on a rare resist-dyed linen fragment with Biblical scenes accompanied by identifying Greek inscriptions. Its style and iconography, as compared with other early Christian objects, place it in the sixth century, and its indubitable Egyptian origin lends support to an Alexandrian origin for certain ivories, which have been variously attributed to Egypt and Constantinople.

Shepherd, Dorothy G. "A Dated Hispano-Islamic Silk," in Ars Orientalis II, 1957, p. 373-382, illus., plates.

We have here an important contribution to the history of Islamic textiles in Spain. The article concerns a hitherto unstudied chasuble

in an obscure parish church near Burgos, which bears the name of an Almoravid sultan who ruled from 1107 to 1143. This, the only woven fabric from medieval Spanish workshops with historic inscription, permits the assigning of an entire group of textiles of similar style and technique to the twelfth century.

Shepherd, Dorothy G. "A Dated Persian Silk of the Buyid Period," in The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art, XLIII, 2, pt. 1, February 1956, p. 19-22, illus., frontis.

A large and handsome fragment of a tomb-cover in the Cleveland Museum is dated by inscription to the year 388 A. H. (998 A.D.). This piece, reported to come from the vicinity of Rayy, with two others also in the Cleveland Museum, is a document of a period of Persian art from which few objects have survived.